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Editors' Notes

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Editors' Notes

D'ESTA LOVE AND STUART LOVE

We are grateful to Timothy M. Willis for editing this excellent issue of *Leaven* on the theme of *Creation and New Creation*. Tim is the Blanche E. Seaver Professor of Religion at Pepperdine University, where he teaches Old Testament. Furthermore, he is a valued colleague and friend and we are so pleased that he has partnered with us in the work of *Leaven* journal. In *Creation and New Creation* Tim has drawn together an interesting variety of topics and writers, and we are certain that you will enjoy reading this issue.

Our next issue of *Leaven* is edited by John Holland of Emmanuel School of Religion and addresses human sexuality. A topic we have not yet explored in *Leaven*, we look forward to reading the issue in the summer of 2008. We will finish the year with our annual issue dedicated to the Pepperdine University Bible Lectures, the theme of which is "The Sermon on the Mount."

We appreciate your loyal support of *Leaven* and ask that you remember us in your prayers.

GUEST EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION: *Creation and New Creation*

TIMOTHY M. WILLIS

Virtually every semester of my teaching career has included at least one class that surveys the Old Testament. The greatest level of interest and student participation comes in regard to Genesis 1–3. The explanation for this lies in part in the fact that this is the first topic encountered, and in part in the fact that it is one section of the Old Testament that most of my students have regularly covered in Sunday school classes. But the explanation runs much deeper.

The opening chapters of Genesis are in many ways foundational to Christian thought. In the first three to four pages of the Bible, concepts that are basic to our self-understanding as human beings come to the surface. Where did we come from? Why are we here? How do we fit in the big picture of the universe? Why are we the way that we are—mortal, morally imperfect, finite and yet with the innate drive to ponder the infinite? The questions are seemingly endless. The answers that these pages provide—even those that are only partial—frame the way that we conceive of our world and our place in it. That framework, in turn, provides a primary lens through which we make decisions about how we are to live our lives.

A text that is so foundational is likely to have influenced numerous other texts in the Bible, and that is certainly true of creation. In fact, every section of the Bible—perhaps even every book—in some way reflects the influence of the Creation story. It is part of the "meta-narrative" of the Bible. One of the writers in this issue speaks of the movement from utopia to distortion to redemption that is the Creation story. All biblical writers seem to be aware that they play a role in promoting the redemption of what has been distorted in the hope of recapturing or restoring the original utopian situation. The ideal of the original creation has been lost, but believers see themselves as part of a new creation, "God's re-creation" that has been ushered into the world in the person of Jesus Christ. But this new creation has been realized only partially so far.

It is impossible for an issue like this to do little more than scratch the surface concerning a few of the myriad of ideas arising from such an important text and topic. **TOM OLBRICHT** provides an important

example of how the issues raised in these opening chapters of Genesis extend broadly through the entire Bible. He writes about the issue of male-female and husband-wife relationships, showing how these develop from a pre-fall ideal in Genesis 1–2 to a post-Fall struggle in Genesis 3 to a central component in God’s redemptive work in the world. **JARED WOLFE** takes a narrower approach, focusing our attention almost exclusively on Genesis 2–3 and giving a close reading of some of the main expressions in the descriptions of three foundational relationships introduced there. **TAMMY DITMORE** is even more specific, concentrating on the “curse” on woman in Gen 3.16a. Her remarks on this passage, based on personal experience and informed reflection on the Bible, provide an excellent example of how we discern God’s redemptive work in the world. The essay by **PHILLIP McMILLION** broadens our perspective again, as he lays out the conceptual role of creation in wisdom literature to teach the uniqueness and sovereignty of God, and to promote the human responses of righteousness and worship. **JOHN WILLIS** is slightly more restrictive as he writes about the single theme of God’s “glory” in the Old Testament (especially in Psalms), showing how just one theme derived from the creation account can be developed so richly in later texts. **JEFFREY PETERSON** and **JENNIFER THWEATT-BATES** provide two examples of the importance of creation in the teachings of Paul. Jeff carefully unpacks some of Paul’s teachings on the image of God, showing how this theme factors into the crucial interplay between (new) creation and conversion. Jennifer brings the discussion full circle by returning us to the topic of husband-wife relationships in 1 Corinthians 11. Her remarks unintentionally illustrate the importance of incorporating ideas from many of the previous essays into our reading of New Testament passages like this one. **KRISTER WHITE** challenges us with a reflective piece on our role as participants with God in the redemption of life in a “creation [that] has been groaning in labor pains until now” (Rom 8.22). Finally, two liturgical readings close the issue. **LEE MAGNESS** calls us as creatures to care for creation in the name of the creator, while **STEPHEN C. JOHNSON** explores the themes of separation and reunion in a worship service that evokes the stories of Babel and Pentecost.

